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Who's Crazy Now?

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WHO'S CRAZY NOW?

A RAPID-FIRE FARCE

BY

HARVEY R. DENTON

Member of National Vaudeville Artists and The Actors' Fund of America, and Author of "The Million Dollar Cheque," "The Star Witness," "The Eleventh Commandment," "What Would You Have Done," "Corinthians 12-15," "The Failure of Diggs & Co.," "The Society of Failures," Etc.

CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

TO

MILLIE AUDREY EVANS

The Greatest "Pickaninny" artist the stage has ever known, and for whom the part of Snowdrop was especially created, this little play is lovingly dedicated.

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WHO'S CRAZY NOW?

CHARACTERS.

CHARLIE SMOOTH, *alias* THE KIDDER...*Rapid-fire Straight*
ABIGAIL SNIFFEN .....*Eccentric Old Maid*
SNOWDROP LEBLANC .....*Dancing Pick*
EXPRESSMAN .....*Tough* } *Stagehand or can be omitted.*
OFFICER MULDOON.....*Eccentric Irish* }
PROFESSOR TIMOTHY TWITTERS .....*Fussy Old Man*
EXPRESSMAN *and* MULDOON *double.*

PLACE—*Miss Sniffen's Home, New York City.*

TIME—*About Four P. M. Today.*

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Thirty-five Minutes.*

LIGHTS—*Full Throughout.*

COSTUMES AND MAKE-UP.

SMOOTH—First entrance, convict suit, and over it a very long, full raglan-style overcoat, open so as clearly to show to audience the convict suit. Soft black hat. Rough shoes —fullers' earth. Close crop wig for prison shaven-head effect. On second entrance overcoat must be buttoned up tight and legs of convict suit trousers must be rolled securely up far enough to be invisible. Third entrance, down the stairs, entire change to be black frock coat and black trousers, square-toed shoes like PROFESSOR'S, only patent leather, white shirt and a collar and stock tie on the same order as PROFESSOR'S only more modern.

ABIGAIL—First entrance, street dress, very old-fashioned, even to the point of exaggeration. Second entrance, no coat, hat or gloves, but same dress—old-fashioned flowered goods. The dress must be distinctly funny in its out-of-dateness, *but not loud or ugly*. Face make-up about sixty or sixty-five, but there must emphatically be *absolutely no lining of a kind to make her grotesque*. She is eccentric and ridiculous, but, although frankly burlesque, *never low burlesque*. Wig with bang and sausage curls.

SNOWDROP—Grease paint number 20, *not burnt cork*. Pick wig with four pigtails tied with colored ribbons. Cute little house dress with apron. Flat or dancing shoes.

PROFESSOR—First entrance, great coat, large muffler, arctics, woolen mitts, earlaps, old-fashioned tall-crowned, straight-brimmed silk hat. Second entrance, gray frock coat and trousers, old-fashioned plaid waistcoat with heavy seal watch fob. Square-toed dull-black shoes. Eyeglasses on ribbon. Wig, bald except for fringe of hair round sides and back and snake lock; but over bald part is worn a wig on the toupee order, which conceals baldness until SMOOTH takes toupee off.

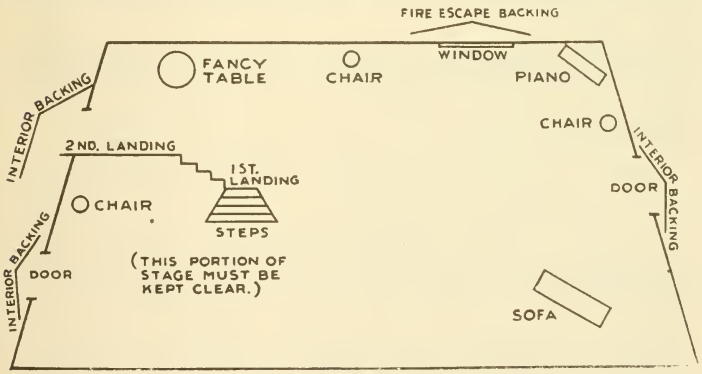
THE WORK.

The work throughout is absolutely *rapid-fire*. SMOOTH works in a very slick offhand manner, speaking all the time

in a kidding way, especially in the scenes with ABIGAIL. ABIGAIL works very gushingly, like an old woman trying her best to be young and kittenish. It is better to overdo her than to underdo her. SNOWDROP works very light and skipping, always dancing about and making a kick at every exit. PROFESSOR works very fussy, with short nervous little movements, flitting about like a restless old bird. EXPRESSMAN works as tough as possible. MULDOON works as nearly as possible like the late Jimmie Russell—large and floridly masculine with a mincing walk, a smirk and feminine ways.

IMPORTANT PROPERTIES.

Watch, bracelet, hair combs and necklace for ABIGAIL.
Wallet, stuffed-out, for SMOOTH.
Trunk, must be steamer size.
Long-handled botanist's net for PROFESSOR.
Twelve packages of different sizes for PROFESSOR.



When the back-flat cannot be obtained, use C. D. F. and put door across C. D. for window. Stairs can be omitted. In the actual set the stairs come much nearer to the R. 1. entrance.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance up stage, etc.; up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

WHO'S CRAZY NOW?

At rise, electric bell very loud and continuous off L. Continue bell, making comedy rings, such as buck-and-wing breaks, mosquito parade, etc., until just before entrance of EXPRESSMAN.

SMOOTH *enters at rise through window, appearing head first from below as though climbing up fire escape. Looks hastily around and crosses toward door R. As he gets just above door he sneezes. Stops, puts hand over mouth and looks about, alarmed. Overcoat falls open, disclosing convict uniform to audience.*

ABIGAIL. (*Start calling "Snowdrop" while still off stage, the instant the curtain rises. She enters door R., walking at down-stage angle, and stands fumbling with glove, facing down stage so she does not see* SMOOTH, *who is just above her.*)

ABIGAIL. Snowdrop! Answer the bell! (*Stands with back toward banisters of stairs.*)

SMOOTH. (*Creeps softly toward door R., when he suddenly sneezes again.*)

ABIGAIL. (*Jumps around right, making a both-feet-off-the-floor jump as in pantomime.*)

SMOOTH. (*Jumps in same manner at the same instant, which brings him left of* ABIGAIL *instead of right, but still behind her. The instant this business is finished he sneezes again.*)

ABIGAIL. (*Jumps around in same manner, facing left.*)

SMOOTH. (*Jumps around behind her at the same instant she jumps, and as he lands right of her he quickly slides through door R.*)

(*All the above business must go like a streak of lightning.*)

ABIGAIL. Oh, dear, I'm so nervous! I thought I heard some one sneeze. Snowdrop! Answer that bell! Snow-

drop! Where are you? Snowdrop! (SNOWDROP *looks about, gradually backing up close against banisters.*)

SNOWDROP *enters, sliding down banisters, bumps into* ABIGAIL.

SNOWDROP. Hyere Ah is, Miss Abbie!

ABIGAIL (*jumps nervously, dropping reticule and gloves*). Heavens! Child, how you startled me! Answer that bell —the neighbors will think it's a fire!

SNOWDROP. Yas'm—yas'm! (*Dances off L.*)

ABIGAIL (*giggles girlishly, picks up bag and gloves and resumes putting on gloves*). Oh, dear! I wonder if every bride-to-be feels shivery? I'm all in a fluster! What if he should arrive today after all, and my new gown not ready!

EXPRESSMAN *enters L., bearing trunk.*

SNOWDROP (*follows behind him*). Keerful now! Doan bump de walls! Doan scruff up de cyarpet! Doan bang de cheers!

EXPRESSMAN (*crosses to foot of stairs and slams down trunk. Very tough*). Say! Wot d'yer t'ink I am, er trained seal? (*Crosses L.*)

SNOWDROP. Hey! Look hyere, man! Dat trunk wants ter go upstairs!

EXPRESSMAN (*pauses and looks around*). Well, I ain't stoppin' it!

SNOWDROP. Yo's er fresh mug!

EXPRESSMAN (*times cross so as to be exactly in door L. for this speech. Plant this speech as it is sure-fire*). Ah, blow up de chimney, smoke! (*Exit quickly, L.*)

ABIGAIL. Oh, mercy! What a very rude man! He's got me all of a tremble!

(*This is the one weak scene in the act, but it is absolutely essential because it places the plot. Therefore, bear in mind these two facts: It is Plot Material, hence it must be planted fat, but it is weak, there being not a laugh in it* (*one whole minute without a laugh*), *hence it must be played quickly and snappily.*)

SNOWDROP. Lawse, Miss Abbie, yo' as nervous as er bride!

ABIGAIL (*simpers*). Tee-hee! Oh, Snowdrop, how strange that you should say *that* when I *am* a bride!

SNOWDROP. Yo' *is!*

ABIGAIL. Well, almost.

SNOWDROP. "Almost!" Huh! Dat ain't no good! (*To audience.*)

ABIGAIL. Well, we can't be married till the Professor gets here, can we?

SNOWDROP. Oo, golly, yo's gonter *ma'y de Perfesser?*

ABIGAIL (*coyly*). Yes.

SNOWDROP (*excitedly interested*). What he look like?

ABIGAIL (*confused*). I don't know.

SNOWDROP. Doan know what he look like? Yo' mus' er done yo' co'tin' in er dark room!

ABIGAIL. I've never met him.

SNOWDROP. Nebber met him! An' yo's gonter ma'y him? (*To audience.*) Dat's some gamblin'!

ABIGAIL. I put an advertisement in a matrimonial paper and the Professor answered it. That was six months ago. and now he's coming all the way from Jacksonville, Florida, to marry me. (*No movement on this speech.*)

SNOWDROP. Am dat his trunk?

ABIGAIL. Yes. He checked it through because he had to stop over in Washington. Get the janitor to put it in the spare room upstairs. (*Crosses to door L. during speech.*)

SNOWDROP. Yas'm.

ABIGAIL. The Professor wrote that he *might* be able to get here today—so if he arrives during my absence treat him with every courtesy and don't cut any monkeyshines! Remember, he is your future master!

SNOWDROP. Yas'm, Ah'll be good.

ABIGAIL. And now to the dressmaker's to try on my wedding gown! (*Exit L., very gushingly.*)

SNOWDROP (*mimics her walk, follows her L. a few steps, and gushing tones*). Try awn mah weddin' gaown!

SMOOTH *enters on* ABIGAIL'S *exit and crosses to C. Be*

careful to have overcoat fastened so as not to show convict suit on this entrance.

SNOWDROP (*makes sweeping turn R., holding out imaginary train of wedding gown and bumps into* SMOOTH). Golly, man, yo'-all scared me! Whar yo' come from?

SMOOTH. The Hudson River Vocal College, originally. More recently from Jacksonville, Florida.

SNOWDROP. Oh! Am yo' Perfesser Twitters?

SMOOTH. I'm the bird.

SNOWDROP. Yo'-all mus' be er magic perfesser. Ah didn't se yo' come in.

SMOOTH. I came by wireless.

SNOWDROP. By wireless?

SMOOTH (*illustrating with slick clean-cut gestures*). Yes—the Wireless Express. An invention of my own. You press the button, thus creating an air wave. Jump into the wave, being careful not to spill the currents, and—off you go!

SNOWDROP (*to audience*). Dat man ain't right.

SMOOTH. I came in the back way to surprise your mistress. (*Looks at trunk as though seeing it for the first time.*) Ah! I see the rag-box beat me to it!

SNOWDROP. Huh? Oh, de trunk. Yassuh. De dog-gone 'spressman wouldn't take it upstairs.

SMOOTH. Never mind, I'll take it up myself, little Chocolate Drop.

SNOWDROP (*grins*). Lil' Chocolate Drop! He's er nice man!

SMOOTH. I'll just get out of my traveling clothes and put on a fresh suit. (*Unconsciously removes hat and scratches his head, disclosing his prison-cropped head.*)

SNOWDROP. All right, Perfesser. Yo'll find yo' room all ready fo' yo', suh—head er de stairs. (*Suddenly sees his head and stops short, mouth open.*)

SMOOTH. What's the matter?

SNOWDROP. Mah lan', Perfesser, whar yo' hair?

SMOOTH (*with a start puts hand to head*). My hair!

(*Quickly puts hat on again.*) Well, you see, a bull chased me up the river and the singing teacher trimmed me.

SNOWDROP (*to audience*). Ah hyears squirrels roun' hyere somewhar.

SMOOTH (*starts to pick up trunk—stops*). Oh, by the way—I'm expecting my grandfather any minute. He's down the street playing marbles with the boys.

SNOWDROP. Playin' marbles!

SMOOTH. Second childhood. He's a little—er, you know. (*Points to head, does comedy "cracked" business.*)

SNOWDROP (*in a lowered voice, a little scared*). Bugs?

SMOOTH. Eh-heh.

SNOWDROP (*little more nervous*). Am he—am he bad?

SMOOTH. Not often.

SNOWDROP. H—how often?

SMOOTH. Once a month he gets a violent fit.

SNOWDROP. H—has he had d—dis month's yet?

SMOOTH. No. It usually comes on the fifteenth.

SNOWDROP (*rolls her eyes around to a large wall calendar hanging on flat. It reads in big letters* SEPTEMBER 15).

SMOOTH. But sometimes he skips a day.

SNOWDROP. K—kin yo' t—tell if he's gwine ter s—skip?

SMOOTH. Oh, yes. He's all right till he gets to thinking I'm his grandfather and *he's* the Professor. If he introduces himself as Professor Twitters, that's a sure sign the fit's coming on.

SNOWDROP. Wh—what do he do?

SMOOTH. Sometimes he bites. Sometimes he stabs.

SNOWDROP. Oh lor-r-rd!

SMOOTH. But don't be alarmed. It's easy to calm him.

SNOWDROP. Whut'll Ah do?

SMOOTH. Sing him a nursery rhyme. If that don't smooth him, dance the Highland Fling and the Sailor's Hornpipe—he loves those two dances.

(*Bell off L.*)

SNOWDROP (*jumps nervously*). M-mebbe dat's him!

SMOOTH (*puts trunk on shoulder and starts upstairs*). Do what I told you and he won't hurt you.

(*Bell off L., louder.*)

SNOWDROP (*has started to cross L. as bell rings again, makes funny jump, stops and calls up to* SMOOTH). P-P-Perfesser!

SMOOTH (*stops on first landing*). Yes?

SNOWDROP. K-kin gran-paw read figgers?

SMOOTH. Sure. Why?

SNOWDROP (*tears leaf from calendar, leaving it reading* SEPTEMBER 16). Mebbe he'll think he's done had dat fit. (SMOOTH *laughs and goes upstairs to second landing.*)

(*Bell off L., very impatient.*)

SNOWDROP (*who is edging gingerly L.*). P-P-Perfesser! (*Jumps at bell.*)

SMOOTH (*stops on second landing*). Hello?

SNOWDROP. H-how did he l-look w'en yo' s-seen him last? W-wuz he ex-excited?

SMOOTH. Oh, not very.

SNOWDROP. Not berry! Oh lor-r-rd!

(*Bell off L., violent.*)

SNOWDROP (*jumps as before and exit L., trembling*).

SMOOTH. In about two seconds there'll be something doing! (*Disappears with trunk on second landing off R.*)

PROFESSOR TWITTERS *bustles nervously in, followed by* SNOWDROP, *L. Has arms full of bundles, carries old-fashioned carpet-bag and under his arm is a long-handled botanist's net.* (*See "Costumes and Make-Up."*) *He is a very excitable little man and keeps continually moving about with short, restless, nervous little steps as he talks.*

PROFESSOR TWITTERS. Dear me! Dear me! How very long you were opening the door, my dear. Why, I declare, I—I'm quite chilled!

SNOWDROP (*gazing at his great coat, mittens, etc.*). He must ca'y er oil-stove round with him w'en it gits winter!

PROFESSOR (*crosses over R. and puts bundles, bag and net down on chair*). I almost began to think there was nobody home.

SNOWDROP (*to audience*). Dere ain't.

PROFESSOR. What did you say, my dear?

SNOWDROP. Ah say, look out fer de paint!

PROFESSOR (*backs hastily away from newel-post*). Paint! Good gracious! My new coat! Is—er, ahem! Is your mistress in?

SNOWDROP. No, suh. She at de dressmaker's tryin' on her double harness.

PROFESSOR. Double harness? Oh, you mean her wedding habiliments.

SNOWDROP. She didn't say nuffin ter me 'bout Billy Ments.

PROFESSOR (*fussing with bundles and paying no attention to what she says*). My trunk is here, I presume?

SNOWDROP. De Perfesser's trunk am here. Ah dunno 'bout yo's, suh.

PROFESSOR. Well, that is the same—oh! (*Smiles.*) Of course! How stupid of me! I haven't introduced myself. I am Professor Timothy Twitters, A.B., M.A., Ph.D., Dean Emeritus of the Entomological Department of the School of Synthetic and Analytical Biology in the University of Dixie, Jacksonville, Florida. (*Delivers last sentence without pause or inflection.*)

SNOWDROP. Columbia record!

PROFESSOR. I beg pardon—?

SNOWDROP. I say, yo' hab some record.

PROFESSOR (*pleased—smiles*). Well, yes, I believe it is rather creditable, if I may be pardoned for saying so. Now, since my trunk is here, I think I'll just change my clothes and spruce up a bit before Miss Sniffen returns. Oh, I have a little present here for your mistress. (*Selects parcel from heap.*) A rare specimen of the fililoo-bug. Put him in the kitchen near the stove and don't let him get in a draft. You have to be very careful how you treat bugs. (*Hands her package.*)

SNOWDROP (*takes package at arm's length*). He'd oughter know.

PROFESSOR. Now, if you'll kindly tell me where my room is, my dear—

SNOWDROP. De Perfesser's room's at de head of de stairs. Ah specs yo'll hafter bunk in wid him.

PROFESSOR. My dear child, are you hard of hearing? I've just told you that *I* am Professor Twitters.

SNOWDROP (*soothingly*). Now, now! Yo' jus' go upstairs and de Perfesser'll fix yo' up O. K.

PROFESSOR (*becoming irritated at last, speaks emphatically, taking a step or two towards her*). How many times must I tell you that (*speaks very emphatically, slightly raising voice*) I—am—the—Professor!

SNOWDROP (*backs away*). Dat's all right! Dat's all right! Doan get excited, granpaw!

PROFESSOR. "Grandpa!" T-t-t! Such impertinence!

SNOWDROP (*points to calendar*). Did yo' see de calendar, granpaw? Did yo' see de calendar?

PROFESSOR. Well, well, what about the calendar?

SNOWDROP (*half sings her words, smiling broadly and hopping about in a semi-dance, in the manner of one trying to amuse a baby, bringing her voice up in rising inflection every time she gets to the word "date"*). See de *date*, granpaw, see de *date!*

PROFESSOR (*testily*). Yes, yes, I see the date. It's wrong.

SNOWDROP (*still singing words and swaying from side to side*). Oh, no, it ain't!

PROFESSOR. Oh, ye-e-s it i-i-is. (*Same business as* SNOWDROP.) Why she's got *me* crazy!

SNOWDROP (*same business*). Oh, no, it a-a-ain't!

PROFESSOR (*very exasperated*). I say it is! Don't you suppose I know what day of the month it is! (*Removes glasses and opens mouth to breathe on them, taking step towards her.*)

SNOWDROP (*as he opens mouth she backs away*). Doan bite, granpaw! Doan bite!

PROFESSOR (*starts to breathe on glasses, stops and stares at her*). What on earth is the matter with the child?

(*Reaches to breast pocket for handkerchief to polish glasses.*)

SNOWDROP (*as he reaches to pocket she holds up package* PROFESSOR *has given her*). Doan pull dat knife, granpaw—else Ah'll sqush dishyere fililoo-bug!

PROFESSOR (*has taken handkerchief from breast pocket —stops, stares at* SNOWDROP, *backs away in alarm*). Bless my soul! I' believe she's a little off!

SNOWDROP. Rock-a-bye, granpaw, awn de tree-top—etc. (*Sings nursery song and does Highland Fling and Sailor's Hornpipe.*)

PROFESSOR. Merciful heavens! The child's mad!

SMOOTH *enters down the stairs, now dressed in* PROFESSOR'S *other clothes.* (*See "Costumes and Make-Up."*) *Sees what is going on, laughs. As he reaches bottom of stairs* PROFESSOR *in backing away from* SNOWDROP *bumps into him.*

SMOOTH. Take your base!

PROFESSOR (*with hysterical relief grasps* SMOOTH *by arm*). Oh, my dear sir, my dear sir! I never was so glad to see anyone in all my life!

SMOOTH. I wish I could say the same. (*Quickly.*) I mean, I feel the same way.

PROFESSOR. I was beginning to feel quite alarmed by the peculiar antics of your diminutive Ethiopian.

SNOWDROP. Doan yo' call me names, granpaw!

PROFESSOR. Don't call me grandpa!

SMOOTH. Oh, don't mind Mignonette. She's just playful. Mignonette, make a bow to the gentleman.

SNOWDROP (*makes funny little curtsey and sticks tongue out*).

SMOOTH. Mignonette! For shame! Leave the room!

SNOWDROP. "Mignonette!" (*Exit chuckling, L.*)

(*This scene from here to* SNOWDROP'S *next entrance must be played by the two men with extreme rapidity, just like a talking act in "one," and well down stage.*)

SMOOTH (*turning to* PROFESSOR). Well, Colonel, what's your moniker?

PROFESSOR (*bewildered*). My what?

SMOOTH. Your badge. Your number.

PROFESSOR (*smiles*). Oh, my name? I am Professor Timothy Twitters of Jacksonville, Florida. And you are—

SMOOTH. Doctor Josh Kidder of Fourflush Bluffs, U. S. A. Put 'er there, Prof! (*Slaps his hand into* PROFESSOR'S *and wrings it hard, pumping arm swiftly up and down.*)

PROFESSOR (*winces at grip*). I—I am very happy to meet you, doctor.

SMOOTH. What's your graft?

PROFESSOR. My what?

SMOOTH. Your bark. Your spiel. What do you sell?

PROFESSOR. My dear sir, I do not sell anything.

SMOOTH. Well, what do you do? How do you cop the eats?

PROFESSOR. Oh, you mean my calling.

SMOOTH. Calling! He's a taxi starter!

PROFESSOR. I am a student of entomology.

SMOOTH. Over the fence! Bat 'em lower!

PROFESSOR. Entomology is the study of bugs.

SMOOTH. Oh, you're a nut doctor! That's my line.

PROFESSOR. Nut doctor?

SMOOTH. Yes. A silly specialist.

PROFESSOR. Oh, you are an alienist.

SMOOTH. No, I'm an American. Welcome to our little factory.

PROFESSOR. Factory?

SMOOTH. Sure. This is a dip-joint.

PROFESSOR. A what?

SMOOTH. A bug ranch. A foolish farm.

PROFESSOR. Good heavens! Do you mean to say this is a lunatic asylum?

SMOOTH. Now you've got me. And, believe me, Prof, we've got the classiest line of guests of any crazy-house in the country. We've got here just now—(*use public characters who are being kidded in the newspapers*).

PROFESSOR (*all upset*). Dear me! I came here to meet

Miss Abigail Sniffen—I must have gotten into the wrong house.

SMOOTH. Nope—you threw Big Dick the first crack.

PROFESSOR. You—you don't mean—?

SMOOTH. This is Sniffey's coop.

PROFESSOR. Then—then she—she is—?

SMOOTH. Alas! One of the worst we've got.

PROFESSOR. Good Lord!

SMOOTH. She's got the chaseritis.

PROFESSOR. The chaseritis?

SMOOTH. Yes. All she thinks about is roping a pair of jeans. Did she land you with an ad in a furniture magazine?

PROFESSOR. Furniture magazine?

SMOOTH. Yes. One of these twin-bed dope sheets.

PROFESSOR. I answered her advertisement in a matrimonial publication—

SMOOTH. That's what I said. It's an old gag of hers, Prof. We've had fifty boobs here like you shot full of paper arrows. She runs an ad in six different sheets. We have to let her do it or she'd get wild. She got away from her keeper one day, met one of her postage stamp affinities coming in the door, threw her arms around his neck and bit his ear off.

PROFESSOR. How dreadful!

SMOOTH. If she wasn't loose in the gear, she'd make a great wife, because she's got two virtues you seldom find in one woman.

PROFESSOR. And what are they?

SMOOTH. She's deaf and dumb.

PROFESSOR. Oh, poor woman! And Mignonette, is she also, er—?

SMOOTH. To let? Yes, poor little child! The attic has never been rented. (*Takes out handkerchief and wipes eyes sadly.*)

PROFESSOR. How sad!

SMOOTH. Did she call you grandpa?

PROFESSOR. Yes.

SMOOTH. And dance the Highland Fling and the Sailor's Hornpipe?

PROFESSOR. Yes.

SMOOTH. Alas, poor infant! Her grandfather was a sailor in the Scotch navy, killed during the battle of Jamieson Three Star in the Bar War—and she has never gotten over her loss.

PROFESSOR. Poor little child! Does she ever get violent?

SMOOTH. Sometimes. But all you've got to do is make a noise like a cat. That soothes her—she loves cats.

ABIGAIL (*off L.*). What! The Professor here! Oh, dear, I'm a sight!

SMOOTH (*aside*). I mustn't let them meet! (*To* PROFESSOR.) Won't you go upstairs and take off your things, Prof?

PROFESSOR (*nervously*). Well, it's very kind of you, doctor, but really—er, I'm not used to lunatic asylums, so I—really, I—(*works L.*).

SMOOTH (*grabs him hastily*). I'm sorry, Prof, but just as you arrived I got a phone in my private office upstairs from the Board of Health. One of our patients has scarlet fever and the house is quarantined.

PROFESSOR. Merciful Providence! Quarantined in a madhouse!

ABIGAIL (*off L.*). See if the Professor wants anything.

SNOWDROP *enters L.*

SNOWDROP. Perfesser, Miss Abbie say do yo'-all want anythin'?

PROFESSOR (*takes step toward* SNOWDROP, *speaks soothingly*). Me-ow! Me-ow! Nice cat! Pretty kitty! Me-ow! Me-ow!

SNOWDROP (*backs hastily away*). Git away, granpaw, git away! (*Exit L.*)

SMOOTH. Don't be afraid. Just go upstairs and make yourself at home. (*Leads* PROFESSOR *toward stairs. Pats him reassuringly on head. As he does so,* PROFESSOR'S *toupee comes off in* SMOOTH'S *hand.* SMOOTH *hastily puts it behind his back.*)

PROFESSOR (*all a-tremble*). Oh dear, oh dear! (*Gathers up bundles, bag and net.*) What a situation! Quarantined in a lunatic asylum! Oh dear, oh dear! (*Ad lib as he ascends the stairs and off R.*)

SMOOTH (*crosses over to mirror and puts on toupee. It is really an almost full-size wig, such as are made for street wear for totally bald men. It is almost a perfect fit and covers* SMOOTH'S *crop-wig except for a little rim around the bottom, giving effect of a bad hair-cut.*) Smooth's Patent Hair Restorer. Grows 'em while you wait.

ABIGAIL *enters L., arranging hair, patting down dress, etc. For dress and working jewelry see "Costumes and Make-Up."*

ABIGAIL (*gushingly*). Where is the Professor? Where, oh, where is my love, my affianced husband, my—(*sees* SMOOTH—*stops in maidenly embarrassment—very coy*) oh, pardon me, sir. I thought Professor Twitters—

SMOOTH (*strikes dramatic pose and imitates her gushing tones. In all scenes with* ABIGAIL *he imitates her manner in a very strong kidding way.*) Darling, don't you know me? (*Holds out arms wide.*)

ABIGAIL. What! You? (*Delighted, but can hardly believe her eyes, as the* PROFESSOR *has sent her his picture and she expected to see an old man.*) You are—?

SMOOTH. I are.

ABIGAIL (*with a squeal of joy runs into his arms and throws her arms about his neck, putting her head on his up stage shoulder, leaving his face clear to audience*). Oh, Timothy!

SMOOTH (*looking over her shoulder at audience*). Another boy gone wrong.

ABIGAIL. Oh, joy! Oh, bliss! Oh, rapture!

SMOOTH. Oh, Hel—

ABIGAIL (*breaks*). Professor!

SMOOTH (*continuing*). —len. My Helen!

ABIGAIL (*smiles*). Oh! But my name is not Helen. My name is Abigail.

SMOOTH (*very romantically*). Ah, yes! But I prefer to

think of you as Helen, Helen of Troy, where the collars and shirts come from—Helen, over whom men went mad and fought.

ABIGAIL (*tickled to death*). Oh, Timothy! (*Embraces him.*)

SMOOTH (*aside*). They must have fought to *get away* from *this*.

ABIGAIL. How you make my poor little heart beat.

SMOOTH. Is that your heart? I thought it was my Ingersoll.

ABIGAIL (*playfully scolding*). Professor, how could you so deceive me?

SMOOTH. Did I deceive you?

ABIGAIL. You know you did.

SMOOTH. I knew that sleep-walking habit would get me into trouble some day. (*Substitute line I must have been doped.*)

ABIGAIL. You sent me a picture of a funny little old man, and *you* are young, tall and handsome.

SMOOTH (*imitates* ABIGAIL'S *gush very strong*). Dearest, I did so to test you—to see if you loved me, not for my fatal beauty, but for love's sweet sake.

PROFESSOR (*upstairs off R.*). Mignonette! Mignonette!

ABIGAIL (*startled*). Who's that?

SMOOTH (*mysteriously*). Sh! 'Tis he!

ABIGAIL (*somewhat awed by his tone*). He? Who?

SMOOTH. He whose likeness I sent you as my own.

ABIGAIL. The funny little old man?

SMOOTH. Yes. (*Sadly.*) My poor unfortunate grandparent.

ABIGAIL. Your grandfather? You brought him with you?

SMOOTH (*very sadly*). I had to. I couldn't bear to let them lock him up. You're not angry with me for bringing him? You wouldn't want to have my poor dear old grandpa locked up, would you?

ABIGAIL. Oh, no, no! But why would they want to lock him up?

SMOOTH. Alas! The good old soul is squirrel-bait.

ABIGAIL. Squirrel-bait?

SMOOTH (*touching his head significantly*). No passengers—this car for the barn.

ABIGAIL (*shocked*). You mean he is unbalanced?

SMOOTH. Like a lost bank book.

ABIGAIL. How did he lose his mind?

SMOOTH. Over a woman.

ABIGAIL (*sadly*). Oh!

SMOOTH. I don't wonder he went crazy, for she looked like you.

ABIGAIL (*takes it as meant for a compliment*). Oh, Professor!

PROFESSOR (*upstairs, louder*). Mignonette! Mignonette!

ABIGAIL. Who is Mignonette?

SMOOTH. Ah! She was his loved one.

ABIGAIL (*tearfully*). Did she die?

SMOOTH (*sobbing*). Worse! She went to (*local town*).

ABIGAIL (*nervously*). Does—does he ever get violent?

SMOOTH. Yes—but it's easy to quiet him.

ABIGAIL. What do you do?

SMOOTH. Play baseball with him. He was a great fan when young, and baseball always soothes him.

PROFESSOR (*upstairs, yelling at top of his voice*). *Mignonette!* Come here this instant!

ABIGAIL (*frightened*). He—he seems excited.

SMOOTH. Yes, I'm afraid one of his fits is coming on. You'd better go to your room while I calm him down.

ABIGAIL (*crosses to door R.*). Very well, Timothy. But I shall soon return to those manly arms. (*Exit giggling, door R.*)

SMOOTH. Not while I've got these manly legs. (*Crosses to window and looks out.*) Darn that cop! I'll try the front way. (*Exit L.*)

PROFESSOR *enters down the stairs.*

PROFESSOR. Mignonette! Doctor Kidder! Where is everybody? Someone has broken open my trunk and stolen my clothes. Doctor Kidder! Mignonette!

ABIGAIL *enters R.*

ABIGAIL. Professor, have you calmed grand—(*sees* PROFESSOR, *stops.*)

PROFESSOR (*sees* ABIGAIL). My deaf-and-dumb fiancee. (*Does deaf-mute talk on fingers at her.*)

ABIGAIL. The Professor's grandfather! He's going to have a fit! I'll try the baseball playing to quiet him. (*Does pantomime ball playing: Rubs hands in dirt, rolls ball in fingers, twists into exaggerated pitcher's position, with one leg off ground, throws ball. Does this very quickly, and in short, abrupt movements, making brief pause after each one in order to separate them and to allow* PROFESSOR *to work on them, but makes each pause, though clean-cut, very short. At each pause she glares fixedly at* PROFESSOR *with a stony hypnotic gaze. She makes all this business just as eccentric as possible, but does the actual ball-playing movements correctly.*)

PROFESSOR (*works* ABIGAIL'S *pantomime up throughout, giving a nervous start at each pause and glare. At finish, when she throws ball at him, he does a comedy fall, but, being very careful to work it legitimately so as to make it appear accidental.*) That's the strangest deaf-and-dumb alphabet I ever saw! (*Works L.*)

SNOWDROP *enters L.*

PROFESSOR (*in edging away from* ABIGAIL *he backs into* SNOWDROP. *Jumps hastily away.*)

SNOWDROP (*jumps back from* PROFESSOR). Lawsey! Granpaw's gittin' rambunctious! Ah'll hafter ca'm him! (*Does Highland Fling and Sailor's Hornpipe.*)

PROFESSOR. Now *she's* getting wild again! Me-ow! Me-ow! Nice puss! Nice kitty! Me-ow! Me-ow!

ABIGAIL (*at R.*). Catch the ball, grandpa. (*Ball business.*)

PROFESSOR (*at C.*). Don't call me grandpa!

SNOWDROP (*at L., sings*). Rock-a-bye, granpaw, awn de tree-top!

PROFESSOR (*violently*). Don't call me grandpa!

ABIGAIL. Good grandpa! Kind grandpa!

SNOWDROP (*dancing*). Nice granpaw! Pretty granpaw!

PROFESSOR (*thoroughly frightened, looks from one to the other, as he stands between them, quite bewildered.*) What a terrible position! Hemmed in between two lunatics! (*Does deaf-and-dumb business to* ABIGAIL, *not noticing in the excitement that she has spoken, and then turns and makes cat noises at* SNOWDROP.)

SMOOTH *enters L.* SNOWDROP *is doing Highland Fling and Hornpipe,* ABIGAIL *is doing ball business, and* PROFESSOR, *between them, is alternately doing dumb business to* ABIGAIL *and cat business to* SNOWDROP.

SMOOTH (*leans weakly against flat and laughs helplessly*). They're off!

SNOWDROP. Does yo' feel better, granpaw?

PROFESSOR (*takes step toward her*). Don't call me grandpa!

SMOOTH (*crosses down to R. of* PROFESSOR *between him and* ABIGAIL, *soothingly*). There, there! Don't get excited. She won't hurt you. (*Takes his arm and draws him back from* SNOWDROP.)

PROFESSOR (*relieved*). Oh, doctor! Such a time as I have had with your lunatics.

SNOWDROP. Granpaw!

PROFESSOR (*turns quickly and makes dart at her*).

SNOWDROP (*sticks tongue out and exits quickly L.*).

ABIGAIL (*right of* SMOOTH, *takes him by arm*). Oh, my love! Thank heaven you have returned. Another moment and I should have died of fright.

SMOOTH (*comfortingly*). That's all right. I'll put him to bed. (*Leads her quickly to door R.*) Meanwhile, retire to your maidenly boudoir.

ABIGAIL (*coyly—giggles*). It will not be the boudoir of a maiden much longer. (*Puts her left hand to face, girlishly, as if shocked at her own immodesty, and exit door R.*)

SMOOTH. It will as far as I'm concerned.

PROFESSOR. I thought you said she was deaf and dumb.

SMOOTH. She was. (*Speaking very professionally, like a physician explaining a peculiar medical phenomenon.*)

But the joy of seeing you was so great that the shock restored her impaired faculties.

PROFESSOR. Ah, yes—I have heard of such cases. I do not regret my trip, then, since my presence has benefited the poor creature.

SMOOTH. I'm sorry to inconvenience you, Prof, but you'll have to have your clothes fumigated of the scarlet fever germs before you can leave. Just go upstairs and put your suit outside the door.

PROFESSOR (*crosses to foot of stairs*). But what shall I wear, doctor? One of your patients has broken into my trunk and confiscated all my wearing apparel.

SMOOTH. Oh, don't worry about that. I'll find 'em for you. It's probably Mignonette—she's always up to tricks. Go upstairs and take it easy.

PROFESSOR (*ascending stairs*). Oh dear, oh dear! Such a position to be placed in! What would the faculty say if they knew! (*Ad lib till off.*)

SNOWDROP (*pokes head in cautiously L.*). Am de coas' cleah?

SMOOTH. Clear as net profit.

SNOWDROP *entering.*

SNOWDROP. Where granpaw?

SMOOTH. In his room. You go upstairs and bring his clothes down, so he can't get out.

SNOWDROP. Ah dassen't.

SMOOTH. You don't have to go in. He'll put them outside the door. (*Urges her R.*)

SNOWDROP (*crosses reluctantly to stairs*). Ah's skeered. Ah is.

SMOOTH. You'd better get 'em, or next time he comes down he'll kill you. (*Shoves her up the stairs. He works this entire scene, from* SNOWDROP'S *entrance to her exit, extremely quick.*)

SNOWDROP (*going upstairs, protesting and sniveling*). Why doan' yo' git de clo's? H-he knows yo'! (*On second landing.*)

SMOOTH (*calling up to her*). I've got to calm Miss Abigail.

SNOWDROP (*exit on second landing off R.*).

ABIGAIL *enters R. door.*

ABIGAIL. Did you call me, Timothy?

SMOOTH. Venus, the goddess of love!

ABIGAIL. Oh, you flatterer!

SMOOTH. No—perjurer.

ABIGAIL. Professor, why did your grandfather call you "Doctor"?

SMOOTH. I used to be veterinary surgeon in the 23rd Missouri Infantry.

ABIGAIL. Oh, you've been in the army! How delightful! (*Crosses and sits on couch.*) Come! Let us sit together and read to each other from the books of our lives.

SMOOTH. I'll bet hers is a blank book. (*Crosses and sits on couch beside her.*)

ABIGAIL (*snuggles up to him*). Now, first, you must tell me all the naughty things you have done.

SMOOTH. *All* the naughty things?

ABIGAIL. Yes—every one.

SMOOTH. What time do you have breakfast?

ABIGAIL. Oh, Timothy, you're such a joker!

SMOOTH. I feel like the deuce.

ABIGAIL. Oh, how I'd love to play with your hair. (*Puts hand up.*)

SMOOTH (*dodges*). It's too young to be played with—I just grew it.

ABIGAIL (*suddenly sits up straight and gazes reproachfully at him*). Oh, Timothy!

SMOOTH (*falls into her lap as she takes her shoulder from under his elbow*). Car ahead.

ABIGAIL. *Timothy!* What do you think?

SMOOTH. I'm ashamed to tell you.

ABIGAIL (*reproachfully*). You haven't kissed me.

SMOOTH. Mother didn't raise her boy to be a soldier.

ABIGAIL (*strikes demure pose, closes eyes and puckers up lips*). Timothy! I'm waiting!

SMOOTH. Party doesn't answer.

ABIGAIL (*holds pose till kiss*). Timmie, kiss your little Abbie.

SMOOTH. Abbey! A ruined abbey? (*Looks at her face.*) No—impossible.

ABIGAIL. Ti-i-immie-e-e!

SMOOTH. Goodbye, dear friends, farewell. (*Works up distaste by mugging ad lib, finally kisses her with loud smack.*)

ABIGAIL (*clasps her hands in ecstasy*). Oh, how sweet is love's first kiss.

SMOOTH. Ah, how your fragrant breath takes me back to the happy scenes of my childhood, in the land where I was born!

ABIGAIL. And where was that?

SMOOTH. Bermuda.

ABIGAIL (*cuddling up to him again*). Oh, Timmie, you're so attractive.

SMOOTH (*has arm about her neck—unclasps necklace and slips watch off pin, putting them in his pocket*). Yes—they say I have a taking way.

ABIGAIL. With your protecting arms about me I miss nothing else.

SMOOTH. You will later. (*Unclasps bracelet from her arm, slips ornamental combs from her hair and puts them in his pocket.*)

(*Loud noise of arguing off L.*)

ABIGAIL (*jumps up*). What's that?

Enter OFFICER MULDOON *and* SNOWDROP, *L.*

SNOWDROP. Go 'long, yo' big mick, doan yo' come bustin' in dishyere house!

MULDOON (*angrily*). L'ave go av me coat, yiz little divil, or I'll put yiz in me pocket.

SMOOTH (*jumps up, crosses quickly to* MULDOON, *seizes his hand and shakes it vigorously.*) Well, well, well! This *is*

a surprise! Where've you been all these days, Chief? I haven't seen you in a coon's age. Sit down, Chief, sit down!

MULDOON (*scowl gives way to a broad smile. Removes helmet. Extremely flattered at being addressed as Chief, and explains the mistake very reluctantly, hating to relinquish the intense pleasure of the title.*) Oi—er—ahem! Oi'm afraid ye're—ahem!—(*burlesque modesty*)—a little misthaken, sor.

SMOOTH. Mistaken? Why, isn't this my old friend Chief of Police Murphy?

MULDOON (*modesty business, still more exaggerated*). No, sor. Though there's them that do say the office would not be unworthily filled. (*Makes the mock-modesty very strong, and at finish of speech strikes very pronounced pose, helmet in left hand held like a silk hat, club in right hand, one end against belt, head thrown back, and body swaying slightly from side to side. Lines should be spoken a little like the way* ABIGAIL *speaks in her coquettish scenes with* SMOOTH, *somewhat feminine in manner and tone. There should be a good laugh in this bit if properly worked up between the two men.*)

SMOOTH. Well, I should say not! Look at that head!

MULDOON (*throws head away back*).

SNOWDROP. Look like er auction flag.

SMOOTH. Look at that chest!

MULDOON (*throws out chest*).

SMOOTH. Look at those feet!

MULDOON (*has one foot over the other, like a horse—with exaggerated bashfulness*). Oh, sor!

ABIGAIL. Well, what can we do for you, officer—er—? (*In tone of hinting for a person's last name.*)

MULDOON. "Muldoon," ma'am. (*Bows—nearly falls.*) Will, ye see, ma'am, there's an escaped convict hidin' in the neighborhood—

ABIGAIL *and* SNOWDROP (*both scream together*).

MULDOON.—an' we've ordhers t' sear-r-rch ivry house on th' block.

ABIGAIL. An escaped convict! Oh, Timothy!

MULDOON. Ye haven't seen annythin' av 'im, have ye, sor?

SMOOTH. If he isn't in this room he isn't in the house. I give you my word of honor on that, officer.

MULDOON. Will, Oi hope ye'll excuse me fer botherin' ye, sor.

SMOOTH (*very politely*). Don't mention it. I'm always ready to drop whatever I'm doing when I see a policeman.

MULDOON. Sure, that's viry kind av ye, sor.

SMOOTH. Not at all. I have the greatest respect for (*bows low*) an officer of the law.

MULDOON. Sure it's blarneyin' me ye are, sor. (*Very much overcome by the flattery.*) Good-day, ma'am. Good-day, sor. (*Makes low bow—trips over feet—nearly falls—gets very confused.*)

SMOOTH. Snowdrop, show the gentleman out.

MULDOON (*swells up and exits majestically, L.*).

SNOWDROP (*exit L. behind him imitating walk*).

ABIGAIL (*crosses to* SMOOTH). Oh, Timothy. There's something about a policeman that always upsets me!

SMOOTH (*she is in his arms—pats her on head*). Yes, dear—I've been upset by them myself.

PROFESSOR *appears on upper landing, clad in* SMOOTH'S *convict suit.*

ABIGAIL. You don't think there's any dan—(*she is on* SMOOTH'S *left, a little down stage of him, his left arm about her. As she speaks she turns to look up into his face and sees* PROFESSOR *in convict suit on landing. She breaks off and runs screaming off door R.*)

SNOWDROP *enters L. just before* ABIGAIL *screams.*

SMOOTH (*gazing R. after* ABIGAIL). What the—

SNOWDROP (ABIGAIL'S *scream directs her gaze upstairs, and she, too, sees* PROFESSOR *in convict suit—screams and runs off L.*).

SMOOTH (*at* SNOWDROP'S *scream, directly behind him, he jumps as though shot, turns L. and gazes after* SNOWDROP). I wonder if this *is* a bug-house?

PROFESSOR (*coming downstairs*). Doctor Kidder, have my clothes been fumigated?

SMOOTH (*turns R., sees* PROFESSOR. *Chokes with laughter, puts hand over mouth and turns away L. up stage, shoulders shaking*).

PROFESSOR. I suppose I must look very ridiculous in this masquerade ball costume. That is what it is, I presume?

SMOOTH (*crossing down*). Yes, it's a ball costume, all right—ball-and-chain.

MULDOON (*rushing in L. all out of breath*). I big yer par-r-rdon, sor, fer botherin' ye agin, but th' captain sint me back, sor. A suspicious lookin' characther wuz sane comin' in yer front dure, sor—a quare little owld man—(*sees* PROFESSOR, *crosses and grabs him with a vicious yank*). Aha! Here ye are, me beauty!

PROFESSOR. But, officer—

MULDOON. Don't yez be afther buttin' me, yez bald-headed owld billy-goat! Ain't he th' vicious lookin' divil, though! Come on wid me! (*Starts to drag* PROFESSOR *off L.*)

SMOOTH (*stopping him*). Pardon me, *Sergeant!*

MULDOON (*business of being flattered by title*).

SMOOTH. But do you know what house this is?

MULDOON. Sure, Oi know 'tis the house av an iligant gintleman, sor!

SMOOTH. How long have you been on this beat?

MULDOON. Sure, 'tis not me bate at all, sor. Oi was detailed here today on spicial dooty t' capture this dis'prate crimmynil. (*Has* PROFESSOR *by collar, yanks him hard.*)

SMOOTH. Ah, that explains your ignorance of the fact that this house is the private asylum of Doctor Josh Kidder and this poor unfortunate man is one of my patients.

MULDOON (*satisfied with explanation, releases* PROFESSOR). Oho! Oi see. (*Suddenly becomes suspicious again.*) But wot's he doin' wid th' sthriped soot?

SMOOTH. Sh! (*Takes him aside.*) It's a sad case, *Lieutenant.*

MULDOON (*same business of swelling up*).

SMOOTH. He has a hopeless form of animalitis.

MULDOON. Anny-mile-eatus?

SMOOTH. Yes. He thinks he's a zebra. We have to humor him or he gets wild. We took the suit away from him one day, and he ran out in the street and bit a policeman in the leg. (*Sadly.*) Poor fellow! It had to be amputated.

MULDOON (*getting nervous, edges toward door L.*). Will —er — will — er —er —(*chokes—very abruptly*) good-day, sor. (*Exit hastily, L.*).

SMOOTH (*turns and gazes reproachfully at* PROFESSOR—*speaks with gentle sadness*). See, oh see, what you have made me do! You—*you,* whom I loved and trusted like a brother—you have caused me to prevaricate, to utter false statements — *me,* whom as a child they called Truthful Charles! Oh, my friend! (*Chokes with sob—takes out handkerchief.*) How could you, how could you? (*Puts handkerchief to eyes and turns away. This speech must of course be worked very fast, but absolutely dramatic—this will put it over much bigger than deliberately trying for comedy.*)

PROFESSOR (*takes* SMOOTH'S *hand in both of his*). Oh, my dear, good, kind, noble, self-sacrificing friend! I know you have saved me from eternal disgrace! How can I ever repay you?

SMOOTH (*wipes tears away—still speaks sadly and swallows, like one who has been weeping bitterly*). Since the decline of public interest in dancing (*or any current public craze*) the asylum has been doing very poor business. If you could spare a ten-dollar bill, or even a twenty (*in a tone as though mentioning a smaller bill*), it would go far towards healing a bruised and aching heart.

PROFESSOR. Indeed, I would gladly give you ten times that amount for the service you have just rendered me, but when I purchased my ticket in Jacksonville I found that I had only just enough to get here. I had inadvertently left my wallet in my other coat when I packed my trunk—and that, you know, has been stolen.

SMOOTH (*carelessly starts his hand towards breast-pocket of* PROFESSOR'S *coat which he is wearing. Tries to speak in very casual tone*) Was there—ahem—much in it?

PROFESSOR. Five one-hundred-dollar bills.

SMOOTH (*brings hand a little way out of his pocket and shows a thick wallet to audience—keeps side of coat toward* PROFESSOR *pulled out with other hand so as to act as a screen between* PROFESSOR *and wallet. When* PROFESSOR *mentions amount,* SMOOTH *works up shock. Speaks in broken, semi-hysterical manner.*) Five one-hundred-dollar bills, eh? Five one-hun—(*tugs at collar—swallows hard—passes hand over brow.*) Does it—ahem—does it seem rather warm in here to you?

PROFESSOR. Well, to say the truth, in my present garb *I* am rather chilly.

SMOOTH. Ah, true—how thoughtless of me! Go up to your nice warm room. And take my advice, get rid of that Wall Street disguise. Suppose Muldoon came back—picture yourself walking up the street with a lot of little boys after you!

PROFESSOR (*starts quickly for stairs*). Oh, horrible! I'll do just as you say—I'll get rid of it at once. (*Goes upstairs.*)

SMOOTH (*to himself*). Five one-hundred-dollar bills! (*Looks out over audience as though in a trance.*)

PROFESSOR (*on second landing*). Oh, doctor!

SMOOTH (*comes out of trance with a jump and wheels around*). Eh?

PROFESSOR. You'll have my clothes sent up to me as soon as they've been fumigated, won't you?

SMOOTH. Sure. But it takes time—they have to be fried in a vacuum.

PROFESSOR. Oh, dear, oh, dear, what a terrible experience this has been! Oh dear! Oh dear! (*Exit muttering on second landing off R.*)

SMOOTH (*solus*). A clean get-away, a new suit of clothes, a beautiful head of hair, and five hundred bucks! Smooth, my boy, you ought to have been a lawyer.

ABIGAIL *and* SNOWDROP *simultaneously poke heads in,* ABIGAIL, *R.,* SNOWDROP, *L.*

ABIGAIL. Is that awful man gone?

SNOWDROP. Am de bugler vamoosed?

SMOOTH. Gone where the woodbine twineth.

ABIGAIL *and* SNOWDROP *enter.* SNOWDROP *crosses to rear stairs.*

(*Convict suit comes flying over balustrade and hits* SNOWDROP. *The suit must be made in one piece and have weights sewn inside of coat collar, around bottom of coat, in sleeves, and in bottoms of trousers, so that it will fly when thrown, otherwise it will fall short and land on stairs.*)

SNOWDROP (*screams and jumps back*).

(*This is the beginning of the "finish" and from here on the action must be as rapid as possible without a second's pause.*)

ABIGAIL (*sees suit and screams*). He's still in the house! Snowdrop, get the pistol out of the kitchen!

SNOWDROP (*rushes madly off L.*).

ABIGAIL. I'll get father's old gun! (*Rushes wildly off R.*)

SMOOTH. The war is on! If that bull's beat it, here's where little Willie fades. (*Crosses to window and looks out.*)

PROFESSOR (*comes down the stairs—has one arm full of bundles, the long-handled botanist's net over his head, hat on top of net, wears only his hat and shirt, and has overcoat about his waist, holding it with one hand behind him, like an apron, the arms of the coat dangling about his legs*). Doctor! Doctor! Are my clothes fried? Oh dear, I'm so nervous! I cannot remain here any longer! Doctor! Where are you? Oh dear, I'm so nervous! (*Works L.*)

SNOWDROP *enters L. with big old-fashioned 1861 model Colt.*

SNOWDROP. Git outer hyeah! (*Fires pistol at* PROFESSOR.)

PROFESSOR (*tumbles backward*). Good Lord! She's raving! How can I get away? (*Runs R.*)

ABIGAIL *enters R. with large old-fashioned blunderbuss.*

ABIGAIL. Go 'way, you villain! (*Fires at* PROFESSOR.)

PROFESSOR. Merciful heavens! (*Drops bundles in a heap and dashes wildly about.*)

SMOOTH (*comes down from window—takes hat off* PROFESSOR'S *head and puts it on his own*). Pardon me, old top. (*Pulls coat from about* PROFESSOR'S *waist, revealing him in shirt and underwear—crosses up to window.*)

PROFESSOR (*runs madly upstairs with shirt-tail flying*).

ABIGAIL (*faints in chair R.*).

SNOWDROP (*at L., jumps up and down in glee*).

SMOOTH. Who's crazy now? (*Steps through window and, laughing heartily, disappears down fire escape.*)

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